

The New Germans: symphonic poem and music drama

Lecture 10 | Music in the Classical and Romantic Eras MCGY2612



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WHO WERE THE NEW GERMANS?

Die neudeutsche Schule (New German School)

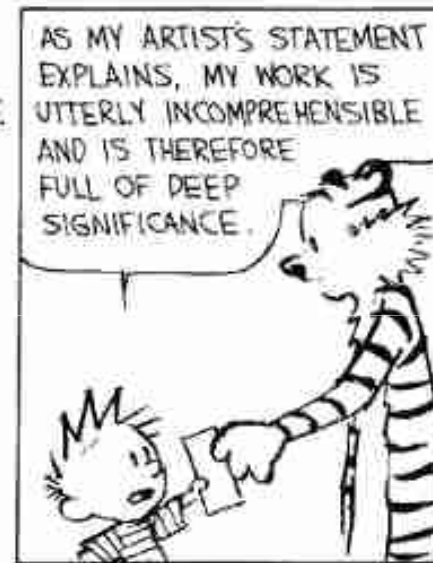
- › Name: Coined by Franz Brendel (editor of the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*) at the first conference of German musicians (*Tonkünstler-Versammlung*) in Leipzig in 1859
- › Spiritual leaders: Wagner, Liszt and Berlioz (the latter two weren't German, incidentally). Lesser figures included Felix Draeseke, Peter Cornelius, Joachim Raff, Richard Pohl, Hans von Bülow)
- › Related terms: *Zukunftsmusiker*, *Zukunftsmusik* (musicians/music of the future) – initially terms of abuse used by opponents, adopted by Liszt and Wagner as self-designations. Also *Fortschritts-partei* (progressive party)
- › Opposition: A manifesto published in the *Berliner Musik-Zeitung* in 1860, signed by Brahms, Joachim and others, protested that the compositions of the 'so-called New German School [are] contrary to the innermost spirit of music, [and] strongly to be deplored and condemned'



ARTISTS' EXPLANATIONS



BUT REALLY, ART IS A PRIVATE LANGUAGE FOR SOPHISTICATES TO CONGRATULATE THEMSELVES ON THEIR SUPERIORITY TO THE REST OF THE WORLD.



LISZT ON SYMPHONIC COMPOSITION 1855

- › The poetic solution of instrumental music contained in the programme seems to us one of the various steps forward which the art has still to take, a necessary result of the development of our time, than a symptom of its exhaustion and decadence (1166)
- › Music in its masterpieces tends more and more to appropriate the masterpieces of literature (1171)
- › The programme asks only acknowledgement for the possibility of precise definition of the psychological moment which prompts the composer to create his work and of the thought to which he gives outward form (1168)
- › The specifically musical symphonist carries his listeners with him into ideal regions, whose shaping and ornamenting he relinquishes to their individual imaginations; in such cases it is extremely dangerous to wish to impose on one's neighbour the same scenes or successions of ideas into which our imagination feels transported. The painter-symphonist, however, setting himself the task of reproducing with equal clarity a picture clearly present in his mind, of developing a series of emotional states which are unequivocally and definitely latent in his consciousness – why may he not, through a programme, strive to make himself fully intelligible? (1069)
- › Liszt's slogan: 'new forms for new ideas, new skins for new wine'



LISZT'S MAJOR SYMPHONIC WORKS

Symphonic poems

Ce qu'on entend sur la montagne / Bergsymphonie (1847-1856)

Tasso: Lamento e trionfo (1847-1854)

Les Préludes (1849-1855)

Héroïde funèbre (1849-1856)

Prometheus (1850-1855)

Mazeppa (1850-1855)

Orpheus (1853-1854)

Festklänge (1853-1861)

Hungaria (1854)

Die Ideale (1856-1857)

Hunnenschlacht (1857)

Hamlet (1858)

Symphonies

Eine Faust-Symphonie in drei Charakterbildern (1854-1861)

Eine Symphonie zu Dantes Divina Commedia (1855-1856)

*LES PRÉLUDES, D'APRÈS LAMARTINE**

What is our life but a series of preludes to that unknown Hymn, the first and solemn note of which is intoned by Death? – Love is the glowing dawn of all existence; but what is the fate where the first delights of happiness are not interrupted by some storm, the mortal blast of which dissipates its fine illusions; the fatal lightning of which consumes its altar; and where in the cruelly wounded soul which, on issuing from one of these tempests, does not endeavour to rest his recollection in the calm serenity of life in the fields? Nevertheless man hardly gives himself up for long to the enjoyment of the beneficent stillness which at first he has shared in Nature's bosom, and when 'the trumpet sounds the alarm', he hastens to the dangerous post, whatever the war may be, which calls him to its ranks, in order to recover at last in the combat full consciousness of himself and entire possession of his energy.

* *Méditations poétiques*



LES PRÉLUDES: COMMON MOTIVIC KERNEL

mm. 1-6



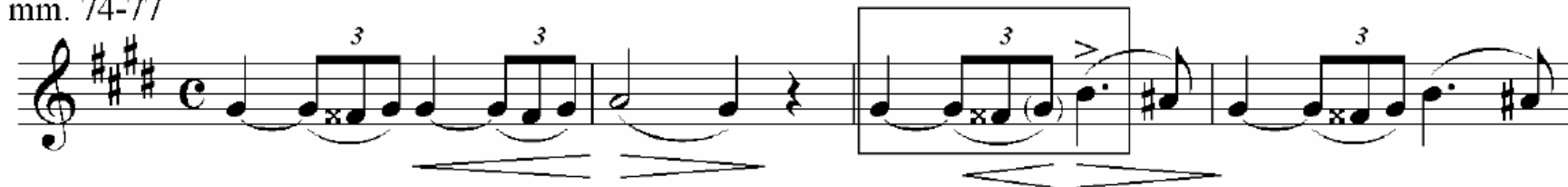
mm. 35-36



mm. 47-50



mm. 74-77





LES PRÉLUDES: EXPOSITION

6 (44)

più cresc.
più cresc.
p
più cresc.
più cresc.
molto riten.
più cresc.
più cresc.
più cresc.
più cresc.
F. L. 3.
molto riten.

(45) 7

Andante maestoso.
sempre stacc.
sempre stacc.
sempre stacc.
Andante maestoso.



LES PRÉLUDES: EXPOSITION

8 (46)

(47) 9



LES PRÉLUDES: EXPOSITION

10 (48)

B

R

(49) 11

L'istesso tempo.

L'istesso tempo.



LES PRÉLUDES: EXPOSITION

12 (50)

Poco rall. - -

in E.

in E.

sempre dolce

pizz.

arco

Poco rall. - -

(51) 13

Solo.

p dolce espressivo

pizz.

arco



LES PRÉLUDES: EXPOSITION

14 (52)

Page 14 (52) of the musical score. The score is written for a piano and features a complex arrangement of staves. The top system includes a grand staff (treble and bass clef) and a piano staff. The bottom system includes a grand staff and a piano staff. The music is in a key with two sharps (F# and C#) and a 3/4 time signature. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The bottom system includes a piano staff with a pizzicato (pizz.) marking and a diviso (div.) marking.

(53) 15

Page 15 (53) of the musical score. The score is written for a piano and features a complex arrangement of staves. The top system includes a grand staff (treble and bass clef) and a piano staff. The bottom system includes a grand staff and a piano staff. The music is in a key with two sharps (F# and C#) and a 3/4 time signature. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The bottom system includes a piano staff with a pizzicato (pizz.) marking and a diviso (div.) marking. The score is marked with 'C' at the beginning and end of the system.



LES PRÉLUDES: EXPOSITION

16 (54)

L'istesso tempo.

L'istesso tempo.

(55) 17



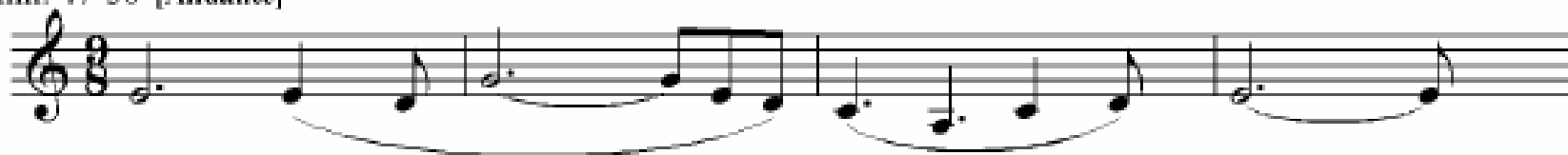
LES PRÉLUDES: EXPOSITION

18 (56)

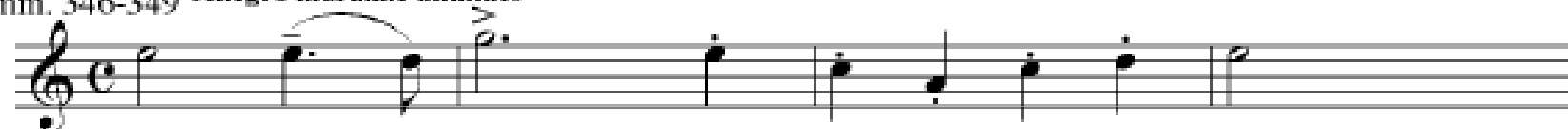
(57) 19

LES PRÉLUDES: THEMATIC TRANSFORMATION

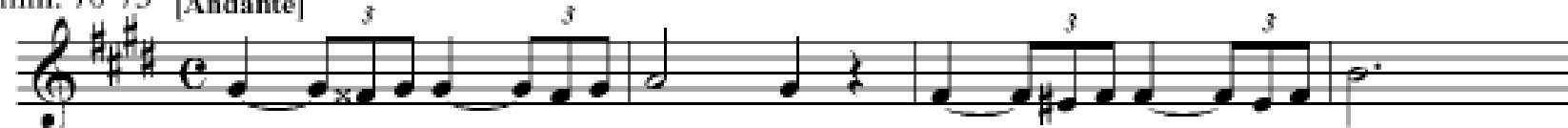
mm. 47-50 [Andante]



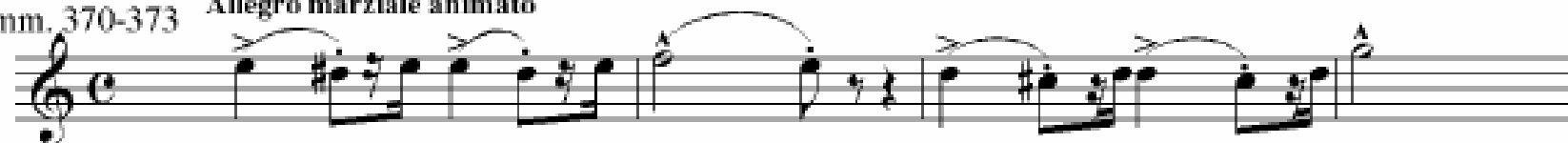
mm. 346-349 Allegro marziale animato



mm. 70-73 [Andante]



mm. 370-373 Allegro marziale animato





LES PRÉLUDES: RECAPITULATION

60 (98)

Allegro marziale animato.

Allegro marziale animato.

(99) 61



LES PRÉLUDES: RECAPITULATION

62 (100)

N

Piccolo

(101) 63



LES PRÉLUDES: RECAPITULATION

64 (102)

0 poco riten.

cresc.
più cresc.
cresc. molto
rinforz. molto
div.
molto cresc.
0 poco riten.

Tempo di marcia.

(103) 65

Tempo di marcia.
cresc. molto
0 poco riten.

in G. B. Cis.
Militair-Trommel.
Becken.
Grosse Trommel.
unis.
P. L. S.



LES PRÉLUDES: RECAPITULATION

(105) 67

F. L. 3.

Piu maestoso.



LES PRÉLUDES: RECAPITULATION

68 (106)

P **Vivace.**

P **Vivace.**

P. L. 3.

(107) 69



LES PRÉLUDES: RECAPITULATION

72 (110)

molto ritard. .

in G.B.C.

molto ritard. .

(111) 73

Andante maestoso.

Andante maestoso.



LES PRÉLUDES: RECAPITULATION

74 (112)

sempre stacc.

(113) 75



LES PRÉLUDES: RECAPITULATION

76 (114)

(115) 77

LES PRÉLUDES: FORMAL LAYOUT

Bar	Section	Formal description	
1	4_4 Andante	Introduction	
35	12_8 Andante maestoso	Exposition: P (C major)	
47	9_8 L'istesso tempo		TR
70	4_4		S (E major); links into next section
109	Allegro ma non troppo	Development	
131	12_8 Allegro tempestoso		
182	4_4 Un poco più moderato		
200	6_8 Allegretto pastorale		[Episode]
260		Recapitulation: S (A major) + Pastoral idea (C major)	
296	[Accelerando]		
344	2_2 Allegro marziale animato		TR fanfares
370	Tempo di marcia		S (C major)
378			TR
405	12_8 Andante maestoso	Coda [?]: P (C major)	



LES PRÉLUDES: CYCLE VS SONATA

mm.	Form	Cycle
1-34	Introduction	[First movement]
35-46	Exposition Main theme	
47-69	Bridge	
70-104	Subsidiary theme group	
105-108	Transition	
109-159	Development Elaboration of basic motive	
160-181	New theme	
182-199	Elaboration of bridge theme	
200-295	-----	Interior movement
296-343	Recapitulation Subsidiary theme	
344-404	Bridge	Finale
405-419	Coda/Main theme	-----

Figure 17: Form and cycle in Liszt's *Les Préludes*

WAGNER'S MAJOR WORKS FOR THE STAGE

Early works

Die Feen (1833-1834)

Das Liebesverbot (1834-1835)

Rienzi (1837-1840)

Romantic operas

Der fliegende Holländer (1840-1841)

Tannhäuser (1842-1845; rev. 1860-1861)

Lohengrin (1845-1848)

Music dramas

Der Ring des Nibelungen

Das Rheingold (1851-1854)

Die Walküre (1851-1856)

Siegfried (1851-1871)

Götterdämmerung (1848-1874)

Tristan und Isolde (1854-1859)

Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg (1845-1867)

Parsifal (1857-1881)

ROMANTIC OPERA: *TANNHÄUSER*



Henri Fantin-Latour, Tannhäuser--Venusberg, 1876

Plot outline: The story tells of a minstrel-knight, Tannhäuser, who is loved by Elisabeth, the niece of his feudal lord, but finds his way into the supernatural realm of the Venusberg (mountain of Venus), a sinful, sensual paradise. After his return, he reveals this during a song contest, and is only saved from summary execution by the intervention of Elisabeth. He goes to Rome to expiate his crimes, but is refused absolution until the Pope's staff should sprout. Discouraged, he is about to return to the Venusberg (and so be damned eternally), but is saved by the prayers of Elisabeth, who has died praying for him. He too expires, but we learn that the Pope's staff has indeed sprouted, indicating his redemption.



'O DU MEIN HOLDER ABENDSTERN' [1/2]

Wolfram's song

The musical score is for the song 'O du mein holder Abendstern' by Wolfram von Eschenbach. It is presented in a three-system format with vocal and piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is common time (C). The tempo is marked '(♩. = ♩)'. The score includes the following lyrics and musical markings:

pure, kind-ly light.
Weg aus dem Thal.
Wood sustain, Strings pizz.
p
p
più p
Harp.
p
pp
Oh, star of eve, — thy ten — der
O du mein hol — der A — bend —
beam Smiles on my spir — its trou — bled dream;
stern, wohl grüssfich im — mer dich — so gern:



O DU MEIN HOLDER ABENDSTERN [2/2]

From heart that ne'er its trust be-tray'd, Greet, when she
vom Her-zen, das sie nie ver-rieth, grü-ße sie,

pass-es, the peer-less maid, Bear her be-yond this
wenn sie vor-bei dir zieht, wenn sie ent-schwebt dem

vale of sor-row, To fields of light that know no
Thal der Er-den, ein sel'-ger En-gel dort zu

mor-row; bear her be-yond this
wer-den; wenn sie ent-schwebt dem

pp *trem.*

più p *più ritard.*

vale of sor-row, to fields of
Thal der Er-den, ein sel'-ger

ppp *poco cresc.*

light that know no mor-row.
En-gel dort zu wer-den!

dim. *pp* *a tempo.*

Lento. *p*

Bassoons sustain.

(He continues to play on his harp, his eyes raised to heaven.)

Cello.

p

più p

sempre più p



TANNHÄUSER'S NARRATION (ACT III)

Andante. (♩ = 60)

Now mark, Wolfram! mark well!
Hör' an, Wolfram! Hör' an!

Vlns.
Tenor.
Cello.

p

Con - trite in spir - it, as no pil - grim yet on
In - brunst im Her - zen, wie kein Bü - sser noch sie

più p
un poco cresc.



TANNHÄUSER'S NARRATION

Wagner — Tannhäuser, Act III

earth hath been, I bent my steps to Rome. An
je - fühlt, sucht' ich den Weg nach Rom. Ein

dim. *p* *Wind.* *riten.* *p* *più p* *a tempo. Strings.* *p* *poco cresc.*

an - gel had dis - pell'd the pride of sin, its mad pro - fane - ness from my bo - som; for
En - gel hat - te, ahl der Sün - de Stolz dem Ue - ber - mü - thi - gen ent - wunden; für

her sake I went forth, a pil - grim, to rec - on - cile of - fend - ed Heav'n; She who with
ihn wollt' ich in De - muth bü - ssen, das Heil er - flehn, das mir ver - neint, um ihm die

tears - for me had plead - ed, should know my sin had been for - giv'n!
Thrä - ne zu ver - sü - ssen, die er mir Sün - der einst ge - weint!

Wagner — Tannhäuser, Act III

life - blood in the cause di - vine; when in the Hos - pice he sought rest and
Blut ich zu des Höl - sten Preis; als im Ho - spiz der Mül - de sich er -

dim. *più p* *p* *più p*

shel - ter, on ice and snow it was that I sought mine; lest
quick - te, die Gile - der bet - tet' ich in Schnee und Eis; ver -

It - a - ly's, fair scenes my heart had gladden'd I pass'd them blindfold, so — my soul was
schloss'en Augs, ihr Wun - der nicht zu schauen, durch - zog ich blind I - ta - liens hol - de

pp *poco riten* *p* *pp*

sad - den'd. I went, my wast - ed heart remorse was burning, That for my
Au - en. Ich that's, denn in Zer - knirschung wollt' ich bü - ssen, um mei - nes

dim. *p* *Un poco più moto. (♩ = 80)* *pp* *cresc.* *rit.*

sake an an - gel wait - ed mourn - ing.
Eu - gel's Thrä - nen zu ver - sü - ssen!



TANNHÄUSER'S NARRATION

Wagner — Tannhäuser, Act III

Thus Rome I gain'd at last, with tears im -
Nach Rom ge - lang' ich so zur heil' - gen

ploring, I kneit be - fore the rood - in faith a - dor - ing.
Stel - le, lag be - tend auf des Hei - lig - thu - mes Schwelle. (d.: d)

When day - light broke, the sil - v'ry bells were pealing, Thro' vault - ed roof a
Der Tag brach an, da läu - te - ten die Glö - cken, her - nie - der tön - ten

song divine was stealing, A cry of joy breaks forth from thousand
him - mli - sche Ge - sän - ge. - - - - - da jauch - ztes auf in brün - sti - gem Froh -

etc.

SOME OF WAGNER'S IMPORTANT WRITINGS

Zurich writings

Art and Revolution (1849)

The Artwork of the Future (1849)

Judaism in Music (1850, rev. 1869)

Opera and Drama (1850-51)

A Communication to my Friends (1851)

On Franz Liszt's Symphonic Poems (1857)

Music of the Future (1860)

On Conducting (1869)

Beethoven (1870)

On the Designation 'Music Drama' (1872)

A look at the nature of German opera today (1872-3)

Mein Leben (1872 [part], 1911 [cuts], 1963 [entire])

- › *Gesamtkunstwerk* (Total artwork): Wagner's own term for what would result from the union of the arts of poetry, music and dance (as well as visual arts)
- › *Musikdrama* (Music drama): The usual generic description of Wagner's works after *Lohengrin*, but not one he used. In an 1872 essay 'On the term "Music drama"', he suggested instead 'deeds of music made visible'
- › *Bühnenfestspiel* (Stage festival play): Official designation given to *Der Ring des Nibelungen*
- › *Bühnenweihfestspiel* (Stage festival consecration play): Designation Wagner gave to *Parsifal*, the only work written expressly for Bayreuth
- › *Stabreim* (Stem rhyme): An ancient Germanic verse form, which avoids end rhyme and regular metre in favour of a subtle play of assonance and alliteration

A WAGNERIAN GLOSSARY [2/2]

- › *Leitmotiv* (Leading motive): Term often used for the recurring musical motives which form the symphonic web of Wagner's mature works. Often associated with specific concepts or entities, they fulfil a communicative as well as a musical role
- › *Unendliche Melodie* (unending melody): description of Wagner's mature style, in which obvious hiatuses are avoided, and the music seems to flow in an unbroken arioso
- › *Barform*: A form similar to the sentence, consisting of two stanzas (Stollen) and a closing section (Abgesang), i.e. AAB, often found as an organising principle on the small and large scale in Wagner's works
- › *Bogenform* (arch form): A ternary ABA structure, another commonly found structuring principle

Excerpts from his Zurich writings

- › It was Beethoven who opened up the boundless faculty of instrumental music for expressing elemental storm and stress. [...] Harmonic melody [...] was capable, though merely borne by instruments, of the most limitless expression together with the most unfettered treatment. (156)
- › The last symphony of Beethoven is the redemption of Music from out of its own element as a *universal art*. It is the *human* gospel of the art of the future. Beyond it there can be no *progress*, for there can follow on it immediately only the completed artwork of the future, the *universal drama*, to which Beethoven has forged for us the artistic key.
- › In instrumental music the innate capabilities of music developed into boundless power, those operatic forms, like burned-out bricks and mortar, stayed chill and naked in their pristine shape, a carcass waiting for the coming guest to pitch his fleeting tent within. (100)

Excerpts from his Zurich writings

- › The problem with contemporary opera, Wagner diagnosed, was that ‘a Means of expression (Music) has been made the end, while the End of expression (the Drama) has been made a means’
- › ‘In the drama, we must become *knowers* through the *feeling*. The understanding tells us “*So it is*” only when the feeling has told us, “*So it must be*” (189)
- › Stabreim. In the interest of intelligibility, the poet has so to limit the number of his action’s moments, that he may win the needful space for the motivation of those retained. (192)
- › The word poet has concentrated an infinitude of scattered moments of action, sensation, and expression – only cognizable by the understanding – to a point most accessible to the feeling; now comes the tone poet, and has to expand this concentrated, compact point to the utmost fullness of emotional content (207)

Excerpts from his Zurich writings

- › The poetic-musical period: *Die Liebe bringt Lust und Leid / Doch in ihr Weh auch webt sie Wonnen* (211)
- › Leitmotif: A musical motive (Motiv) can produce a definite impression on the feeling, inciting it to a function akin to thought, only when the emotion uttered in that motive has been definitely conditioned by a definite object, and proclaimed by a definite individual set before our eyes.' (222).
- › Orchestra: The orchestra indisputably possesses a faculty of uttering the unspeakable (217). Allies this with the orchestra's connection to dance and gesture. Orchestra takes on the role of the chorus in Greek tragedy.

Excerpts from his Zurich writings

- › [In traditional opera] The disconnected was so particularly the character of operatic music. Only the separate tone piece had a form coherent in itself; and this was derived from absolute-musical good pleasure, maintained by custom, and imposed upon the poet as an iron yoke' [In music drama] 'In their suggestive, their ever-warranted return, analogous to that of the Stabreim, the chief motives of the dramatic action – having become distinguishable melodic moments which fully materialize their content – now mould themselves into a continuous artistic form. The new form of dramatic music will have the unity of the symphonic movement; and this it will attain by spreading itself over the whole drama, in the most intimate cohesion therewith, not merely over single smaller, arbitrarily selected parts. So that this unity consists in a tissue of root themes pervading all the drama, themes which contrast, complete, reshape, divorce, and intertwine with one another as in the symphonic movement; only that here the needs of the dramatic action dictate the laws of parting and combining, which were there originally borrowed from the motions of the dance.' (229-30)

GERMAN ART FOR A GERMAN PEOPLE

Hans Sachs, final address to the people in *Die Meistersinger* Act III scene 2

Beware! Evil tricks threaten us:

If the German people and kingdom should decay
under a false foreign rule

soon no prince would understand his people

And foreign mists with foreign vanities

They would plant in our German land

What is German and true none would know it, if it
did not live in the honour of German Masters.

Therefore I say to you:

Honour your German masters

Then you will conjure up good spirits!

And if you favour their endeavours,

Even if the Holy Roman Empire

Should dissolve in mist,

For us there would yet remain

Holy German Art!





DER RING DES NIBELUNGEN

Bühnenfestspiel für drei Tage und einen Vorabend

Stage festival play over three days and a preceding evening



Arthur Rackham, 'Brunnhilde'

- › *Das Rheingold* (The Rhine gold)
- › *Die Walküre* (The Valkyrie)
- › *Siegfried* (Siegfried)
- › *Götterdämmerung* (Downfall/Twilight of the gods)

Wagner first sketched *Siegfrieds Tod* (later *Götterdämmerung*) as early as 1848. In 1851, he conceived the idea of prefacing it with *Der junge Siegfried* (later *Siegfried*), and subsequently with the first two. Composition of the music began in 1853, and was completed after several interruptions in 1874

DIE WALKÜRE ACT III, SCENE III (ENDING)



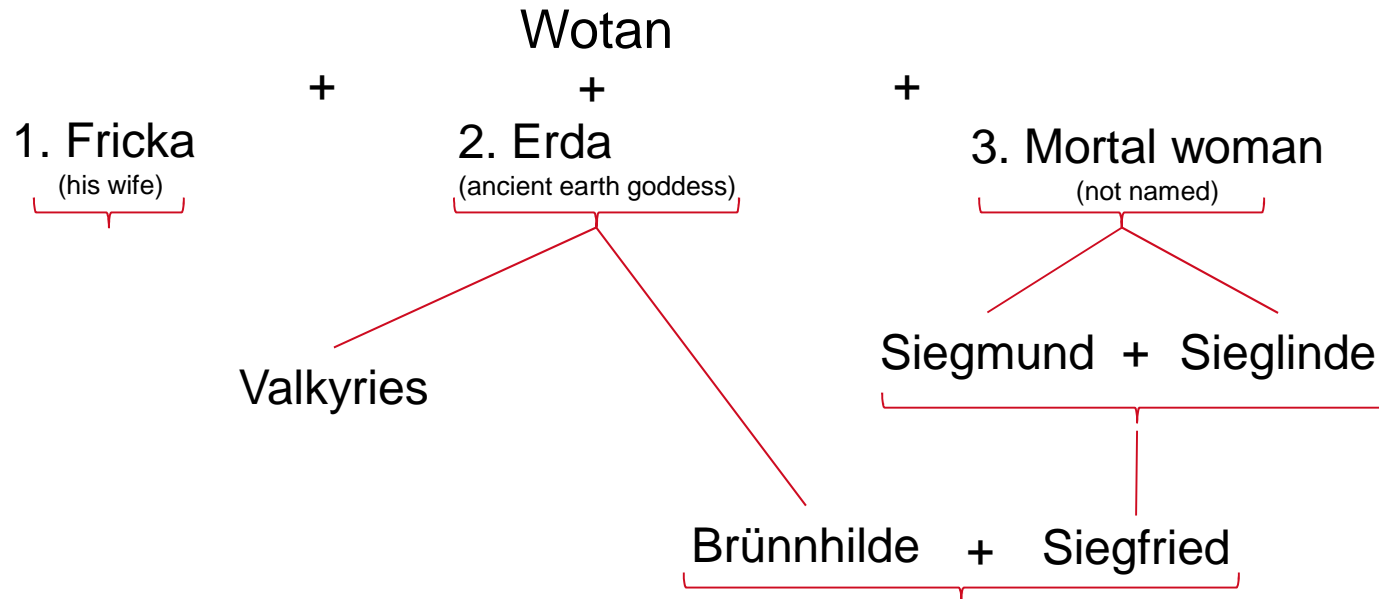
Wotan summoning Loge (Arthur Rackham)

Background: Wotan, the head of the gods, has been complicit in the theft of the Rhinemaidens' gold (out of which a ring has been made), and falls victim to Alberich's curse. At the end of *Rheingold*, he conceived the idea of fathering a free hero who could rectify matters, as he himself was bound by the oaths on which his power rested. Two of his mortal children, the Wälsung twins Siegmund and Sieglinde, fall in love, and he is forced to condemn them. Wotan sends his warrior-maiden daughter, Brünnhilde, to kill Siegmund in combat, but she is touched by pity, and helps the pair instead. Siegmund is killed after Wotan's direct intervention, but the pregnant Sieglinde escapes.

Act III, scene 3: Wotan passes judgement on Brünnhilde: she is to be stripped of her divinity, cast into a sleep, to be the prize of the first passerby. Brünnhilde pleads that she was only guilty of carrying out Wotan's real wishes. Wotan is moved by this, and decrees that her sleeping form should be surrounded with fire, which only the bravest of mortal warriors would be able to pass.



THE TANGLED FAMILY TREE IN THE *RING*



Incestuous consequences:

- › Brunnhilde is Siegfried's aunt
- › Sieglinde is Siegfried's mother and his aunt; Siegmund his father and uncle
- › Wotan is Siegfried's grandfather and father-in-law and great-uncle

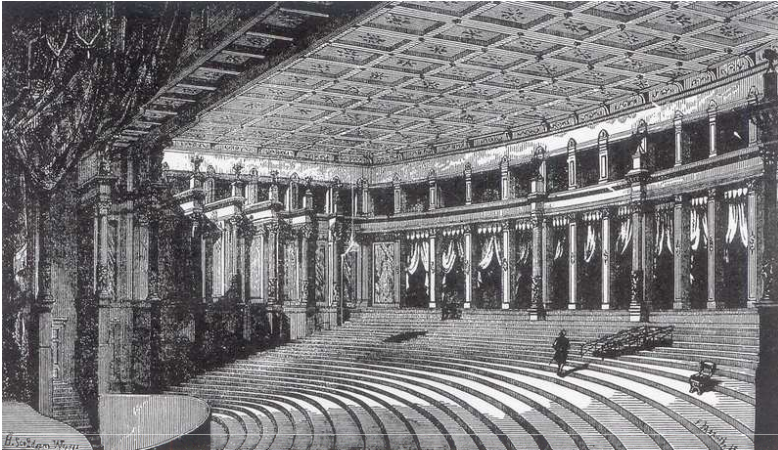


MOTIVIC INTERRELATIONS

Brünnhilde: War es so schmä-lich, was ich ver brach, dass mein Ver brech - en so schmä-lich du be straft?



WAGNER'S FESTSPIELHAUS AT BAYREUTH



Engraving of interior by Édouard Schuré (1875)



The Theatre 'on the Green Hill' today

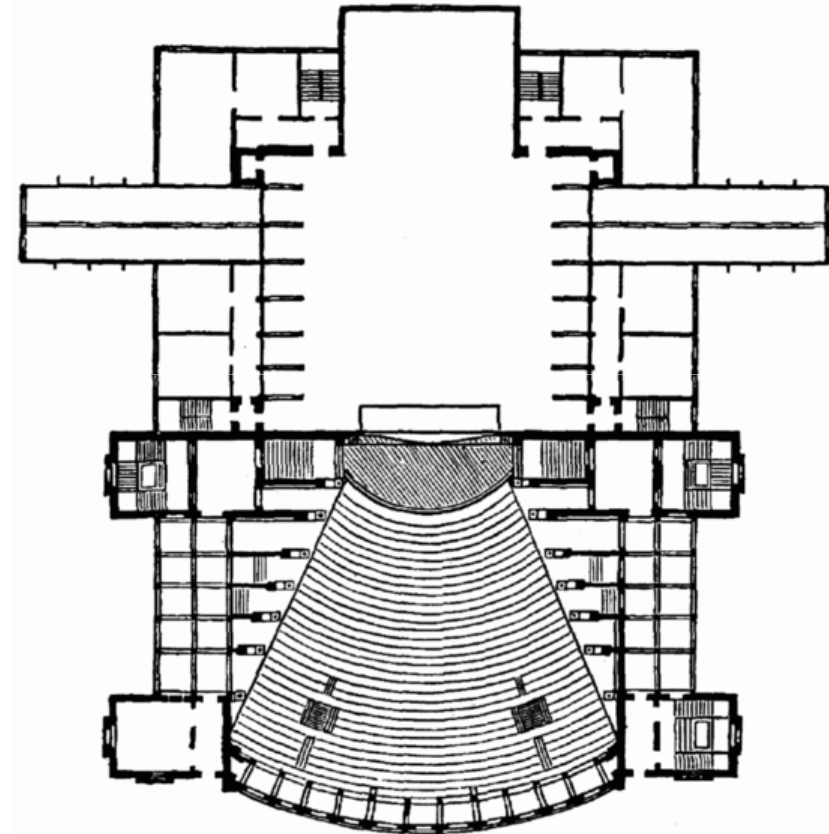


Fig. 4. Richard Wagners Bühnenfestspielhaus zu Baireuth
(Arch. Brückwald).

Layout of interior

SAMPLE EXAM AVAILABLE ON THE WEBSITE



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Exam excerpt 3

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Exam excerpt 4